



You ... and Your Foods Drugs and Cosmetics



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U. S. DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH, EDUCATION, AND WELFARE
FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION

AMERICA, AMERICA!

God mend thine every flaw,
Confirm thy soul in self control,
Thy liberty in law!

--Katherine Lee Bates

A discussion of interest to American consumers,
prepared by the
50th Anniversary Committee of the
Association of Food and Drug Officials
of the United States.

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Washington, D. C.
1956

assure 167 million Americans the most wholesome food and the purest and safest drugs in the world.

New Foods

Never before has the homemaker had a choice of so many good foods. . .canned, bottled, packaged, frozen. . .with "built-in conveniences" that save much time and work in the kitchen.

Complete meals in a package or on a plate... frozen soups, meat, poultry, fish, fruits and vegetables...bread, cereals and milk enriched with vitamins...cake and pudding and muffin mixes...soft drinks and candies in delicious flavors and rainbow colors...ice cream smoother than silk.

Added to these are foods high in nourishment for babies...foods low in calories for weight-watchers...and special foods for people on special diets.

Families who like to "dine out at home" can enjoy Chinese, French, Spanish, Italian dishes...regional specialties of New England, the South, the Far West.

Food Laws in Early Days

Although the housewife of ancient times had nothing to compare with the amazing variety of foods on the market today, she was protected to some extent from certain unwholesome or adulterated products.

Early Mosaic and Egyptian laws governed the handling of meat; Greek and Roman laws sought to prevent the watering of wine.

In the Middle Ages, the Grocers' Company appointed the first public food inspectors of England. In 1202, King John proclaimed the first protective food law in Anglo-Saxon history. A law passed in 1718 imposed a fine of 20 pounds on the culprit who adulterated coffee with any foreign substance.

Then, as always, there were unscrupulous characters who caused trouble for honest merchants and law-abiding citizens.



Food Laws in the United States

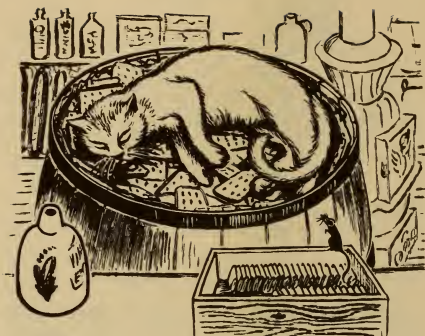
Massachusetts led the way, in 1784, with the first general food law in the United States. In 1850, a year after the Gold Rush, California enacted a pure food and drink law. By 1900 most of the states had similar laws – but the laws were not uniform. Foods that were “pure” in one state might be banned by another.

This situation became more and more intolerable for the food industry, and finally, with other responsible citizens, food manufacturers urged the passage of protective Federal legislation which, in interstate commerce, would be the same for all states. The nation was coming closer and closer to a law that was to prove the best in the world for its time.

When Life Was Simpler – and Shorter

Many a housewife of early days spent long, tedious hours curing meat for winter meals... storing potatoes in the cellar.... spreading sliced apples to dry in the sun... packing eggs in waterglass... putting cucumbers in brine. “Boughten” foods were supplied by the neighborhood storekeepers, who scooped tea and sugar out of bins and crackers from an uncovered barrel.

Although vitamins were unheard of, the housewife noticed that her family always



perked up in the spring, when she could add fresh greens to their meat-and-potato meals.

Progress — and Problems

Even before 1900 the food industry was making great progress in the preservation and distribution of its products. Canning was moving from the home kitchen to large factories, and more and more markets were offering canned corn, tomatoes, asparagus, and pineapple.

Food packers were experimenting with new chemical preservatives. They found that such time-honored ingredients as salt, sugar, and vinegar were not the only chemicals they could use to improve the keeping quality, color, and flavor of perishable foods. Unfortunately, limitations of technology resulted in the use of certain "chemical antiseptics" which were of questionable safety. Some were actually poisonous.

The Old-time "Doctoring"

Remedies were not very scientific. The family doctor could usually mix a medicine

at the patient's bedside, from ingredients he always carried in the familiar black bag. Or, if the patient preferred to do his own medicating, as many did, he could visit the corner store and get patent medicines "positively guaranteed" to cure everything that ailed man, woman, or child — from measles and croup and whooping cough to cancer and consumption.

Life was simpler in those days. And it was shorter. Babies born in 1956 have a life expectancy *more than 20 years longer* than babies who were born in 1900.

Milady's Face

In 1906 cosmetics had not become the huge and complicated business that they are today. People used a little cold cream and rice powder, simple toilet waters and perfume. Social life was yet to develop a demand for widespread use of compacts, ointments, lipsticks, facial treatments, make-up kits and countless other beauty aids.

Enter Dr. Wiley

State chemists had been among the first to advocate a Federal food and drug law. They found a fighting champion in 1883 when Indiana's State Chemist, Dr. Harvey W. Wiley, came to Washington. He was appointed Chief Chemist of the United States Department of Agriculture. From that position he directed a campaign of food and drug enlightenment whose beneficial effects are still felt everywhere today.

Dr. Wiley was not only an outstanding scientist. He was also a physician, a teacher and a born crusader. In 1883, and for many years thereafter, he fought for the right of every citizen to have safe and wholesome foods and drugs.

As Chief Chemist, Dr. Wiley was deeply concerned about certain commercial foods which owed their keeping qualities to formaldehyde, salicylic acid, and other chemicals.



Dr. Harvey W. Wiley

Were these foods safe and wholesome when they reached the home kitchen and dining table? Dr. Wiley proceeded to find out. In his famous "poison squad" experiments, a group of young volunteers ate foods containing measured doses of the suspected chemicals and reported their symptoms. These experiments, given wide publicity, dramatized the need for Federal control.

Dr. Wiley's crusade was strongly supported by responsible members of the food and drug industries and by authors, magazine writers, and newspaper reporters. Women's organizations were particularly helpful in telling the public why "there ought to be a law."

Industry and the public recognized that safeguarding the nation's food and drugs is a proper field for government regulation; it is a field in which the people do not have the knowledge necessary for self protection.

Finally, after much debate, Congress responded to the public will, and on June 30, 1906, President Theodore Roosevelt signed the Food and Drugs Act and the Meat Inspection Act.

But New Legislation Was Needed

The Food and Drugs Act of 1906 was unquestionably the strongest in the world for its time. But time sped on, bringing important discoveries in medicine and nutrition...remarkable advances in the production of crops and livestock...in the manufacturing, processing, and distribution of foods and drugs.

In a few years the 1906 law was lagging behind the growth and progress of industry. Homemakers found they needed more precise information about ingredients than the law required. Industry saw the need for official standards for such everyday foods as canned fruits and vegetables; new standards of inspection for factories, packing plants, and warehouses.

A growing need for industry and consumers alike was stronger legal controls for drugs. Too many quacks and charlatans were putting "guaranteed" cancer cures on the market...horseweed concoctions for diabetics...dangerous weight-reducers...mysterious potions which promised to make hair grow luxuriantly on the baldest heads.

One of the loopholes in the 1906 law was the lack of control over cosmetics and mechanical treatment devices. Although some of the products put on the market through fly-by-night operators did more harm to the pocketbook than to the person, others were downright dangerous.

The "Pure Food and Drug Law," as it was popularly known, went into effect in 1907. During that year enforcement officials set up laboratories over the country, appointed inspectors to collect samples of foods and drugs, and devised new methods of testing them. Meanwhile the food and drug industries were preparing labels to conform with the new law, which required that consumers be given certain information needed for intelligent buying.



The Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act.

Again, as in 1906, government, industry, and enlightened citizens urged the passage of protective legislation. They wanted a law stronger and more comprehensive than the original "Pure Food and Drug Law."

In 1938, Congress passed the present Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act, which corrected most of the weaknesses of the Act of 1906.

The purpose of the present law is to insure that foods, drugs, therapeutic devices and cosmetics shipped in interstate commerce, or imported into the country, are pure and wholesome, safe to use, made under sanitary conditions, and truthfully labeled. As an additional safeguard, the safety of every new drug must be proved to Food and Drug Administration scientists before it may be marketed.

Since 1938, FDA scientists have evaluated more than 10,000 applications for the sale of new drugs and have passed more than 7,000.

What the Label Tells

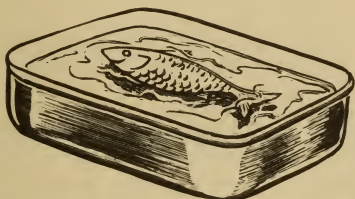
To a large extent, the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act works through the medium of the label. The Act requires that labels, or inserts in the package, give information which helps consumers to buy and use foods,

drugs and cosmetics with safety and satisfaction.

The label tells consumers what they are buying and exactly how much...the name and address of the responsible manufacturer, packer, or distributor.

The label tells the truth — in plain sight and plain words. Olive oil, for example, must not contain any other oil. Black pepper must be pure black pepper; or, if an imitation, it must be so labeled. In processed foods, ingredients must be listed in the order of their predominance.

Containers must fit the contents. A can holding seven ounces of sardines, or any other food, must be the appropriate size for seven ounces; not so large that it could hold twice that amount, and possibly mislead the purchaser.



Labels on foods enriched with vitamins — bread, milk, margarine, baby foods, pet foods and many others — must state the vitamin content.

Official standards are established for such foods as bread, canned fruits and vegetables, tomato catsup, jams, jellies and preserves. Consumers, incidentally, may take part in deciding how much fruit, sugar and other ingredients go into grape jelly, strawberry preserves and similar foods long associated with "that good home-made flavor."

Food standards are set in the best democratic tradition. The FDA holds public hearings and questions housewives on articles of food. It tests hundreds of samples and hears testimony from its own officials and representatives of industry.



When all the evidence is in, the standard for a specific food item is defined on the basis of fair practice. For example, the problem of the contents of strawberry jam was settled at a public hearing when it was decided that traditional usage had set the precedent. Fruit jams and jellies should properly contain 45 parts fruit or fruit juices to every 55 parts sugar.

Setting a food standard is no quick or easy job. The record of the hearings dealing with bread standards covered 17,000 pages!

Drug and Cosmetic Labels

Drug labels are required to state for what purpose the medicine is recommended, how much to take, how often, for how long, whether or not the medicine is recommended for children as well as for adults, and when it is *not* to be taken.

Drugs sold only on a doctor's prescription need not be labeled with the same kind of information required on drugs which consumers may buy and use on their own. For prescription drugs, the doctor and the pharmacist are the safeguards.

For cosmetics, the label is not required to list the ingredients, but the law insists that the cosmetic label must not be false or misleading. Even the containers of cosmetics must be made of safe materials. Thermometers, heating pads, sun lamps and other therapeutic devices used in the home are likewise carefully labeled.

"READ THE LABEL"

A 35-page illustrated booklet giving information required by law to appear on the labels of foods, drugs, medical devices, and cosmetics. For sale by Superintendent of Documents, Washington 25, D. C. Price 15 cents.

Meat Inspection

Probably most homemakers are familiar with the round purple stamp which indicates that meat has been "U.S. Inspected and Passed." Regulation of interstate business in meat comes under the Meat Inspection Act, which requires Federal inspection of all meat shipped in interstate or foreign commerce, and inspection of processing plants.

Canned, processed, and packaged meats also come under the supervision of the Meat Inspection Act. Labels are required to give a name that adequately describes the product, to list ingredients in decreasing order of predominance, to give the net weight, and the name and address of the manufacturer or distributor.



Keeping the Law Up to Date

Probably no law can keep abreast of today's swift changes in foods and drugs. As pointed out recently by a Citizens Advisory Committee which reviewed the work of the Federal Food and Drug Administration, "a revolution is occurring in the field of food technology, exemplified by new chemical additives, radiological sterilization, and 'cooked ready-to-serve' and frozen foods."

New insecticides contribute indirectly to better food crops...hormones used in livestock feed reduce the cost of production.

In the drug field, the use of endocrine products, barbiturates, sulfonamides, and vitamins is steadily increasing...there is continuous and rapid development of new life-saving drugs that were undreamed of only a few years ago.

Scientists are indeed giving us better foods than ever before — and a longer lifetime in which to enjoy them. But new foods and medicines present difficult problems for industry and government, and particularly for those charged with enforcing food and drug laws.

Amendments to the 1938 Act

While its complete revision has not been necessary, the 1938 Act has already been amended a number of times. These amendments include laws to:

Require government testing and certification of the safety and efficacy of penicillin and other antibiotics before they are put on the market;

Define the kinds of drugs which cannot be used safely except under medical supervision, and which may only be purchased on the prescription of a licensed practitioner; and

Require under the Miller Amendment that chemicals be pre-tested to insure safe limits for the amounts left on fresh fruits and vegetables as the result of farmers' spraying and dusting for better products.



Food and Drug Officials

The men and women charged with enforcing the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act and the Meat Inspection Act are experienced and conscientious public servants, dedicated

to the task of administering what has been called "the most significant peacetime legislation in U.S. history".

Since 1938 the size of their job has increased tremendously. More than 96,000 establishments are estimated to be doing a substantial interstate business in foods, drugs, and cosmetics.

Regulation at State and Local Levels

Much of the responsibility and work of enforcing pure food and drug laws fall on the shoulders of state and local officials, since Federal law does not reach products consumed in the same states where manufactured. State authorities in the field were among the first to get behind Dr. Wiley's crusade for federal measures.

Twenty-six states have adopted food, drug and cosmetic laws patterned after the present Federal law. Other states are currently considering such legislation. Uniformity in such laws is advantageous to consumers and industry alike, since it eliminates the hardship of meeting different state requirements.

Citizens Advisory Committee

In 1955 a Citizens Advisory Committee, composed of 14 outstanding men and women from government, industry, labor, education, law, and consumer groups, made a careful survey of the Food and Drug Administration and its needs. They found, after a thorough investigation, that the agency's present resources are "woefully inadequate to discharge its present responsibilities."

New processed and packaged foods...new drugs...new pesticides...are growing rapidly in number and volume — adding new and complex problems to the work of safeguarding foods and drugs, and taxing the limited resources of the Food and Drug Administration. New amendments to the 1938 Act have added an extra load of work for enforcement officials.



Among the Advisory Committee's major recommendations for strengthening the Food and Drug Administration were increased appropriations, increased personnel, much-needed equipment, and a modern building.

The Consumer's Responsibility

This commemorative year is a good time for consumers to get acquainted with the local, state, and Federal laws that protect the nation's health by safeguarding food and drug supplies.

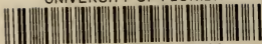
It is a good time to get behind recommendations made to strengthen the resources of the Federal Food and Drug Administration, and state food and drug departments, so they can keep abreast of scientific advances in food and drug technology and with other developments that promise to be almost unlimited in their benefits to mankind.

Maintaining the high standards of wholesomeness and purity of America's foods, medicines, and cosmetics is an exacting and never-ending task. It requires the wholehearted cooperation of government, industry, and responsible citizens everywhere.

As a consumer, can you help make your state food and drug enforcement service a more inviting career for promising young men and women? Are you familiar with the service's work and salary scales? Is your state one of the 26 whose food and drug laws are modeled on the Federal legislation? These and similar questions are appropriate during this anniversary year, and over the years to come.

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